

## Not A Subud Member, Just Someone Who Does The Latihan

So, like so many before me, I decided to leave the Subud Association and simply continue my own latihan in my own way. Recently, however, I have met with 2 other groups of people who feel the same as me about Subud. The first small group is made up of those recently opened members who have left soon after being opened because they have found Subud in theory and practice to be two very different things. The second group are those who after being initially interested in what they heard and had read about Subud (from books like Bennett's, Rofe's and van Hien's, e.g.) found on further investigation (on the internet and meeting their local groups) Subud to be more like an old religion than a new revelation and so chose not to try the latihan. I have been privileged to talk at length to both these groups of people. Taken with the third group (old-timers like myself who have left the formal Association) this amounts to one *large* group of people!

Finding that these three groups of people share my view in 7 major areas has given me the confidence to speak out again. I simply feel that because so many people believe the same things about Subud maybe those members running the Association should be more aware of this? In fact, it begins to look as if Subud will alienate more people than it will support and help if it continues its present course. How then can Subud be for "all of humankind" and truly help this precarious world as Bapak clearly felt it could?

These groups I have mentioned show a marked agreement as to what they find repellent in Subud to-day. I wish to simply bring these to the attention of the present Subud Establishment. My past efforts in this direction are not encouraging so I have no illusions as to their likely reception. Nonetheless, I have learnt to respect my Inner Guidance (believing, however, that it may be wrong!) and my Inner Guidance simply prompts me to give this point of view without worrying too much about its results. So, here goes...

1. First, the Latihan is given only a limited focus in Subud to-day and Bapak's guidance on widening and deepening the Latihan is largely being ignored. There is plenty of evidence for this, ranging from the large numbers of people who have infrequent latihans, to the little focus anywhere on talking about the latihan, to the fact that for the purposes of the new directory of members an active

member is described as someone who has attended latihan *once* in the last 6 months!

Bapak seems to have been aware of this (see “Yesterday’s Latihan” in the Appendix of “Wild West Subud”) And in a letter that Ibu Rahayu wrote on Bapak’s behalf in October 1984 (quoted in the 1988 edition of “Bapak’s Advice And Guidance For Helpers” p130) Bapak is quoted as saying: “You only do the latihan in a routine way, that is, doing the latihan 2 or 3 times a week ***but not really putting it into practice in your everyday life***” and he there advises ***starting every day with “up to 15 minutes latihan”!*** I wonder how many people do that?

I am told that, after the Mexico World Congress, Ibu Rahayu remarked in one of her talks that since Bapak’s death, the latihan seems to have “diminished”. I think it started before then (hence Bapak’s advice!) when the focus shifted from Latihan experiences to the attempt to further Bapak’s words and authority.

2. The personality of Bapak is being over-emphasised and idealized. He is being given a Prophet-like status (at least!) and what he says is replacing the latihan in many people’s lives as the “Guiding Force”
3. As a consequence, his words have become uncritically accepted and his stand point has become too exclusive for Subud to be for “all of humankind” or even to allow Subud to achieve more than the effect akin to a cult.
4. There is too much *religiosity* in Subud. Bapak’s talks are filled with words like “God” and “worship” etc which are part of his own religious (Muslim) faith. These talks are highly valued- and repeatedly quoted- by many Subud members.
5. Its attitude to *women* and to *minorities* is *discriminatory* and old-fashioned. Eg. in the Pewarta magazine Vol V111 No. 1 p. 3 Bapak says:

“The best arrangement, therefore, is that a wife....need not wait the 3 month probation period (if her husband is already in Subud). But

if, on the other hand, the wife is already in Subud and her husband wishes to be opened...he has to wait for three months. The reason for this is that the husband is in truth the head of the family, and it would be out of place and a violation of their essential relationship if the husband were to follow after his wife. For a man is his own master and should not be dominated by his wife”

Of homosexuality, Bapak has written (p118 Bapak’s Advice And Guidance For Helpers):

“homosexuality is not allowed by religion and is not allowed by God...Therefore you must be very firm in avoiding such contact.”

6. Helpers are too often acting as if they, too, have spiritual authority over other people: urging certain rather narrow beliefs onto others (requiring people to hold a religious viewpoint e.g), deciding who should or should not be opened (only those who already believe in God, e.g) Unfortunately, this has led to at least one investigator of Subud to describe Subud as “merely a Muslim off-shoot”
7. The amazing power of “Testing” is recognised in Subud but what about its dangers? And why isn’t there more encouragement of the use of our critical intelligence? Especially as Bapak repeatedly warned us of the need for humility here. Some helpers have even called testing the “voice of God!” Many of us are unhappy about that.

Finally, I would like to end on a more completely personal note. For part of my Lenten experience this year, I brought these 7 problems into my spiritual practice and when Lent ended I experienced a real feeling of celebration as I felt that in 5 of these areas Subud had much to celebrate. I really felt that when a number of misunderstandings were removed we could all of us celebrate: the Latihan, a Guide such as Bapak (how lucky we were!), a real lack of dogma, creed etc., no spiritual hierarchy (or even the semblance of one) and, finally, the true gift of testing!